

Military Collection
State Archives of North Carolina

Lawrence A. Crawford Papers (WWI 119)
[World War I]

Collection Number: WWI 119

Title: Lawrence A. Crawford Papers

Dates: 1917-1919, 1930, 1940s

Creator: Lawrence A. Crawford; American Expeditionary Forces; Robert T. Crawford; and various others.

Abstract

The Lawrence A. Crawford Papers is composed of correspondence, telegrams, a menu, a theater program, WWII ration books and stamps, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the World War I service and WWII life of Lawrence A. Crawford of Greensboro, N.C., in the U.S. Army. Crawford served in the Ambulance Company 321 and later Headquarters Company, 306th Sanitary Train, 81st Division, U.S. Army. The bulk of the collection is composed of letters, postcards, and telegrams from Crawford back home to his family from August 1917 to June 1919, primarily while he was stationed at Camp Jackson, S.C., before shipping out to France. The collection includes an 81st Division Christmas dinner menu and theater program from camps in France. The collection also includes ration books, ration coupons and stamps, OPA ration tokens, ration cards, and U.S. Defense Savings Bonds savings plan books, documenting rationing by the Lawrence Crawford family in Greensboro, N.C., during the WWII.

Physical Description: 0.35 linear feet (1 Hollinger box; 1 artifact box)

Language(s): English

Repository

State Archives of North Carolina, 4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-4614

Restrictions on Access: There are no restrictions on accessing this collection.

Restrictions on Use: There are no restrictions on the use of this collection.

Preferred Citation

[Item name or title], [Box Number], [Folder Numbers], Lawrence A. Crawford Papers, WWI 119, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C.

Acquisition

The collection was received by the Military Collection at the State Archives of North Carolina through the North Carolina Museum of History from Patti Simpson Crawford of New Bern, N.C., in February 2018. The donation was completed in March 2018.

Separated Material

The red WWII OPA ration tokens were stored in an acid-free artifact box, which has the collection number, collection title, box number, and artifacts' description written in pencil on the box lid. This artifact box has been labeled as "Artifact Box 1." This box is being stored at the end of the WWI Papers shelving section in the Military Collection, in the artifact box for the WWI Papers, labeled "WWI Papers, Artifacts Box 2."

Related Material

Collectible WWI postcard sets and a pay record book for Lawrence A. Crawford, Military Collection, North Carolina Museum of History, Raleigh, N.C.

Processing Information

The materials in this collection had been loosely ordered by year in folders when they were received from the donor in 2018. The collection was organized based on the format, time period, and purpose of the materials in acid-free archival folders.

Many of Lawrence Crawford's letters are written on paper that has become very brittle over time from the acidity of the paper. Many of the pages are fragile and beginning to have chips of paper flake off on the edges. Some of the pages were very fragile, and placed in acid-free archival plastic photo sleeves to keep the pages together and stabilize them for long-term storage. Crawford's telegrams are also very fragile and breaking into pieces. They, too, were placed in acid-free archival plastic photo sleeves to make them safer for handling by researchers.

Correspondence is arranged within folders chronologically based on the dates written on the letters or from a circa date taken from the letters' envelopes. Letters for which only month and year could be determined were added within a folder at the end of that month's set of dated letters. All envelopes were discarded after any necessary information was added in pencil to the letters. Envelopes with unique information or dates were photocopied and attached to each letter, using acid-free plastic clips.

The Lawrence Crawford family ration books, stamps, and tokens, were originally stored in one brown ration books' mailing envelope. They were separated into type of rationing item or format of the item, and stored in corresponding folders. The loose ration coupons and stamps were placed together in an acid-free white archival envelope, which was labeled with the contents. The red WWII OPA ration tokens were stored in an acid-free artifact box, which has the collection number, collection title, box number, and artifacts' description written in pencil on

the box lid (see “Separated Material” note for more information on where the artifacts are stored).

Processed by: Matthew M. Peek, March 2018.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged based on the format, time period, and purpose of the materials in acid-free archival folders and appropriate enclosures, in series. The series are as follows: Series I: Lawrence Crawford WWI Materials; Series II: Crawford Family Post-WWI and WWII Materials; and Artifact Box 1.

Biographical Note

Lawrence Aylette Crawford was born on June 17, 1895, in the town of Paint Lick in Garrard County, Kentucky, to Alexander Warwick and Elizabeth Taylor Crawford. By 1900, the Crawford family was living in Garrard County, where Alexander Crawford was serving as a Christian minister. By 1910, the Crawford family had moved to Alfordsville Township in Robeson County, N.C., where Alexander Crawford was serving as a Presbyterian minister at the Ashpole Presbyterian Church. By 1917, the Crawford family had moved to the Greensboro, N.C., living at 320 South Mendenhall Street (near modern-day University of North Carolina-Greensboro).

Lawrence Crawford attended college at Davidson College in Davidson, N.C., starting as a freshman for the 1912-1913 school year. During the 1914-1915 school year, he was a member of the Davidson Golf Club. In his senior year of 1915-1916, Crawford was the star quarterback of his senior class football team, and a member of the reporters’ staff for the school newspaper *Davidsonian*. He received a B.S. degree in 1916 from Davidson College. At the time of his federal draft registration for World War I, Lawrence Crawford was living in Greensboro, and working as a clerk at Southern Life and Trust Company.

Lawrence Crawford enlisted for service in World War I in the Enlisted Reserve Corps (ERC) on June 25, 1917, in Greensboro. He spent the summer of 1917 with his brother Robert T. Crawford at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, in the Reserve Corps. Lawrence reached the rank of Private First Class on August 20, 1917. By September 1917, Lawrence Crawford was assigned to Camp Jackson, S.C., with Ambulance Company 321, 306th Sanitary Train, 81st Division, U.S. Army. Crawford was reassigned to Headquarters Company, 306th Sanitary Train, on May 1, 1918. He remained at Camp Jackson until June 14, 1918, when his unit moved to Camp Sevier, S.C., in preparation for shipping out.

On July 1, 1918, Crawford was promoted to the rank of Sergeant. Around July 18, 1918, Crawford’s unit left Camp Sevier for Camp Albert L. Mills on Long Island, New York. Camp Mills was used by the U.S. military as a port of embarkation for soldiers being sent to Europe for overseas service. Crawford left the U.S. aboard a converted British-Australian cargo ship named *Nestor*, used as a troop transport ship on August 8, 1918. During the trip, the ship’s engine coal stokers went on strike in the middle of the voyage, claiming to be “Irish sympathizers,”

according to Crawford, as part of the Irish War for Independence. American troops had to take over stoking the engines in order for the ship to catch up with their convoy and protective battleships. The ship reached Liverpool, England, by August 20, 1918. By August 31, 1918, Crawford and the 306th Sanitary Train had arrived in Saint-Nazaire, France.

By September 14, 1918, Crawford was stationed in Saint-Dié, France, in the Vosges Mountains. By October 27, 1918, he was stationed in Rambervillers, France. After the Armistice was in place, Crawford and the Headquarters Company, 306th Sanitary Train, were stationed at Les Monthairons, France, near Verdun, with the U.S. Army of Occupation. By December 27, 1918, he was located in Cérilly, France, where he remained through at least the end of February 1919. By February 4, 1919, Crawford was on his week-long leave in Aix-les-Bains, France. By March 15, 1919, he was in Châtillon-sur-Seine, France, by which time Crawford was working partly issuing new clothes to U.S. Army soldiers out of a supply warehouse. Crawford remained stationed in Cérilly, France, from around April 1 through May 1919.

Lawrence Crawford left France in June 1919, and arrived back in the United States at Newport News, Virginia, on June 20, 1919. After being sent to Camp Lee in Virginia from his disembarkation point, Crawford was honorably discharged from active U.S. Army service on June 29, 1919.

After the war, Crawford returned to live with his family in Greensboro, and by 1920 was working again as a clerk for the Southern Life and Trust Company. By 1922, he was serving as an inspector for Southern Life. Crawford would marry Olive Ophelia Chandley of Greensboro on October 17, 1924, in Greensboro, N.C., where the couple would remain living for the rest of their lives. By 1925, Lawrence was the superintendent of the service department for Pilot Life Insurance Company in Greensboro. He was working as an assistant secretary at Pilot Life Insurance by 1930, a position he held through the entirety of the Great Depression with one of the companies thought by experts of the time to be "Depression-proof."

By 1940, Lawrence Crawford was still working as an assistant secretary at Pilot, and his wife Olive was an organist with a local Methodist church. He continued as an assistant secretary at the company through the 1950s. By 1951, Crawford was working now as both the assistant secretary and the department manager at the Pilot Life Insurance Company in Greensboro, and the Crawford family was living on North Mendenhall Street next to the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. By 1956, Crawford had switched companies, and was working as an insurance agent for the Home Life Insurance of New York in Greensboro.

By 1950, Lawrence Crawford had returned to working as the assistant secretary at Pilot Life Insurance Company. He appears to have remained working in the insurance industry until his retirement. Lawrence A. Crawford died on March 31, 1984, in Greensboro, N.C., and was buried in Forest Lawn Cemetery in the same city.

Scope and Content

The collection is composed of correspondence, telegrams, a menu, a theater program, WWII ration books and stamps, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the World War I service and WWII life of Lawrence A. Crawford of Greensboro, N.C., in the U.S. Army. Crawford served in the Ambulance Company 321 and later Headquarters Company, 306th Sanitary Train, 81st Division, U.S. Army. The bulk of the collection is composed of letters, postcards, and telegrams from Crawford back home to his family from August 1917 to June 1919, primarily while he was stationed at Camp Jackson, S.C., before shipping out to France. The collection includes an 81st Division Christmas dinner menu and theater program from camps in France. The collection also includes ration books, ration coupons and stamps, OPA ration tokens, ration cards, and U.S. Defense Savings Bonds savings plan books, documenting rationing by the Lawrence Crawford family in Greensboro, N.C., during the WWII.

Subject Terms

Persons/Families

Crawford, Lawrence A. (Lawrence Aylette), 1895-1984
Crawford, Robert T. (Robert Taylor), 1893-1984

Places

Camp Albert L. Mills (N.Y.)
Camp Jackson (S.C.)
Camp Sevier (S.C.)
Cérilly (France)
Châtillon-sur-Seine (France)
Fort Oglethorpe (Ga.)
Greensboro (N.C.)
Guilford County (N.C.)

Subject—Topical

Davidson College
Pilot Life Insurance Company
Southern Life Insurance and Trust Company
United States. Army. Enlisted Reserve Corps
United States. Army. Infantry Division, 81st
United States. Army. Sanitary Train, 306th
World War, 1914-1918--North Carolina
World War, 1914-1918--United States

Material Types

Correspondence

Menus
Ration books
Theater programs

Collection Inventory

Series I: Lawrence Crawford WWI Materials

Series I is composed of correspondence, telegrams, a menu, a theater program, and miscellaneous materials, documenting the World War I service of Lawrence A. Crawford of Greensboro, N.C., in the U.S. Army. Crawford served in the Ambulance Company 321 and later Headquarters Company, 306th Sanitary Train, 81st Division, U.S. Army. The bulk of the series is composed of letters, postcards, and telegrams from Crawford back home to his family from August 1917 to June 1919, primarily while he was stationed at Camp Jackson, S.C., before shipping out to France.

There is an important 35-page letter written by Lawrence Crawford to his family on December 9, 1918, detailing a complete service history for Crawford to his family up to that point in WWI (**see Box 1, Folder 5**). All of Crawford's letters while on occupation duty from 1918 to 1919 in France are extremely detailed about his view of the local people, life in camp, and issues with shortages of materials and food stuffs. There are very good descriptions of the French commune of Cérilly as well, where his unit was stationed for an extended period.

There are two letters written by Lawrence's brother Robert T. Crawford while they both were stationed at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, in a U.S. Army reserve training camp—these are the only known WWI letters written by Robert Crawford, who served stateside during the war (**see Box 1, Folder 8**). The series also includes an 81st Division Christmas dinner menu and theater program from camps in France. There are miscellaneous materials, including Lawrence's sister Margaret Crawford's original 1919 college graduation invitation, sent to Lawrence Crawford while he was stationed in France.

Box/Folder	Description	Date
1/1	War Correspondence	August-December 1917, 1917
1/2	War Correspondence	January-May 1918
1/3	War Correspondence	June-August 1918
1/4	War Correspondence	September-December 1918
1/5	War Correspondence: Crawford's War Service History Letter	December 9, 1918

1/6	War Correspondence	January-March 1919
1/7	War Correspondence	April-June 1919
1/8	Robert T. Crawford War Correspondence	August 1917
1/9	Headquarters, 306th Sanitary Train, 81st Division, 1918 Christmas Dinner Menu	December 25, 1918
1/10	81st Divisional Theatrical Troupe Play Program and Song Lyrics	Undated
1/11	Margaret Crawford's North Carolina College for Women 1919 Graduation Invitation	May 1919
1/12	Miscellaneous Materials	February 1919, undated

Series II: Crawford Family Post-WWI and WWII Materials

Series II is composed of World War II ration books, ration coupons and stamps, OPA ration tokens, ration cards, U.S. Defense Savings Bonds savings plan books, and miscellaneous materials, documenting rationing by the Lawrence Crawford family in Greensboro, N.C., during the war. The series also includes Crawford's 1930 Greensboro driver's license.

Box/Folder	Description	Date
1/13	Lawrence Crawford's 1930 Greensboro (NC) Driver's License	1930
1/14	Crawford Family WWII Ration Books 1 and 2	1940s
1/15	Crawford Family U.S. Defense Savings Bonds Savings Plan Book	1940s
1/16	Crawford Family Vehicle, Fuel, and Mileage Ration Forms, Cards, and Stamps	1940s
1/17	Crawford Family Miscellaneous Ration Coupons and Stamps	1940s

Box	Description	Date
Artifact Box 1	Crawford Family WWII Office of Price Administration Red Point Tokens	1940s
	28 original World War II Office of Price Administration Red Point Tokens, used or kept by the Lawrence A. Crawford family in Greensboro, N.C., during World War II (1940s).	